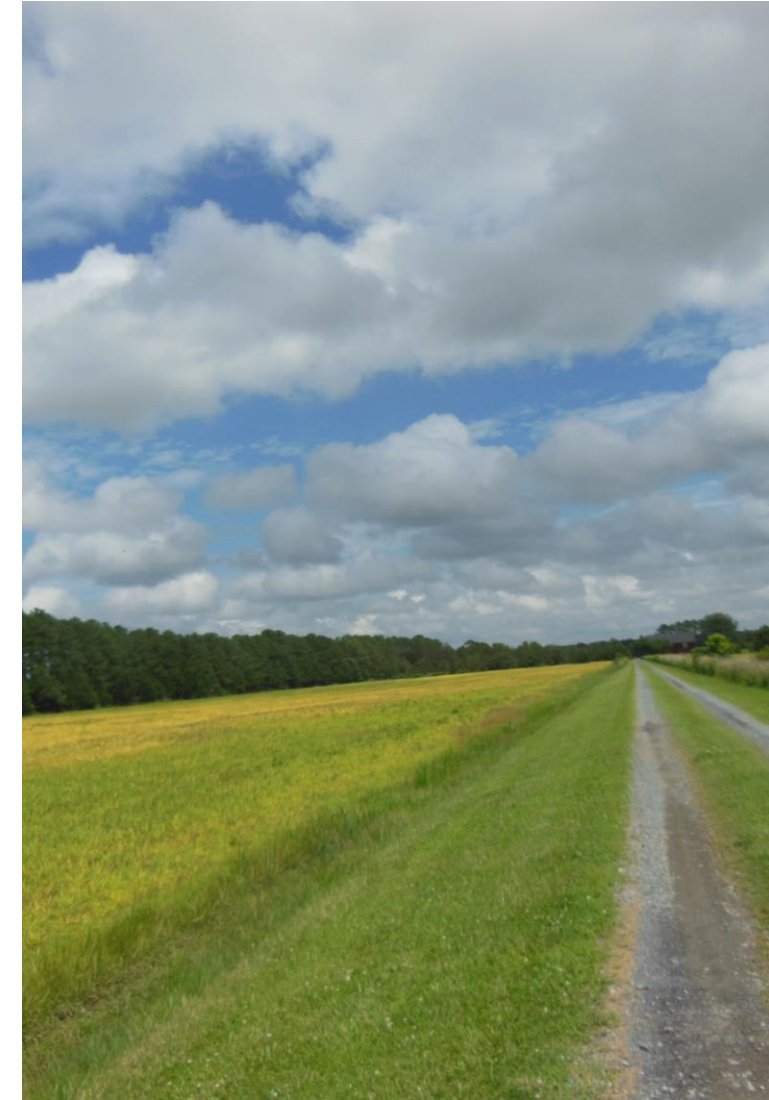


**MAY 30, 2024**

# **THE STATE OF MARYLAND'S CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**



- 10:00 am** Goals for the Day
- 10:10 am** Introducing the Speakers: “The State of Maryland’s Conservation Programs”
- 10:45 am** State of the State Panel Discussion:  
Future of the Programs and Organizations
- 12:00 pm** Lunch
- 12:50 pm** Recapping the 2024 State Legislative Session and Forecasting 2025
- 
- 1:10 pm** All-Attendee Facilitated Discussion:  
Addressing Anti-40X40 Conservation Challenges: Invasive Species and Solar Sprawl





Established in 1969, Program Open Space (POS) symbolizes Maryland's long-term commitment to conserving natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities.



## Program Open Space Stateside

- Preserves natural areas for public recreation and watershed and wildlife protection across Maryland through the acquisition of fee simple land and conservation easements.
- Fee-Simple acquisitions are managed by DNR as State Parks, Forests, and Wildlife and Fisheries Management Areas.
- Primarily funded with State property transfer tax revenue.

POS Stateside has conserved approximately 355,000 acres.



## Recent projects in regions across the state include:

- 260.25-acre Eckel property in Garrett County - Conservation Easement
- 43.75-acre Igusa property in Baltimore County - Gunpowder Falls State Park
- 16-acre M & E LLC property in Worcester County - Pocomoke River Wildlife Management Area
- 293-acre Chesapeake Bay Foundation property in Anne Arundel County - Sandy Point State Park

# Program Open Space Local



- Established in 1969.
- Program Open Space symbolizes Maryland's long term commitment to conserving our natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens.
- Funded from collection of 0.5% state property transfer tax.
- Funds allocated annually to the 23 Maryland Counties and Baltimore City based on a formula.
- Projects are determined by the local government and may be used for planning, acquisition, and/or development of public recreation land or open space areas.
- Total Projects Funded: 7,080
- Total Amount Approved by the Maryland Board of Public Works: \$1.5 Billion
- Number of Acquisition Projects: 1,888
- Amount Approved for Acquisitions: Over \$628 Million
- Acres Preserved: Over 51,000 Acres



# Greenspace Equity Program



- Established in 2023.
- Designed to provide and administer grants to eligible applicants for enhancing the public health and livability of overburdened communities and underserved communities by implementing projects to preserve, create, and enhance community greenspace.
- Community Greenspace:
  - Community Garden
  - Community Gathering Open Space Area
  - Community Woodland
  - Green Network
    - system of greenspaces that are interconnected by linear corridors that facilitate the movement of people and wildlife
  - Park
  - Trail
  - Urban Farm
- Funding in Fiscal Year 2025: \$5 Million
- Types of Projects:
  - Acquisition of property in fee simple or with a perpetual conservation easement.
  - Stewardship – defined as activities to develop a property for public use and improve the conservation value of the property.
- Eligible Applicants:
  - A land trust or nongovernmental organization located or working in an overburdened community or an underserved community where a project is proposed to be implemented.
  - A county or municipality.

# RURAL LEGACY & CREP PERMANENT EASEMENTS



## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rural Legacy Program

- ❖ Created to (§5-9A-01 Natural Resources, Ann. Code of MD):
  - Combat sprawl;
  - Enhance natural resources, agriculture, forestry and environmental protection; and
  - Maintain the viability of resource-based land use and proper management of tillable and wooded areas.
- ❖ Conservation Easements on working lands that preserve and protect farms, forests, rural areas and rural economies.
- ❖ In order to be eligible to sell a Rural Legacy easement a property must be within a designated RURAL LEGACY AREA (§5-9A-02: A Rural Legacy Area is a designated Area “rich in a multiple of agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources.”
- ❖ Partnership with RL Sponsors (local governments and private land trusts); Sponsors identify Rural Legacy Areas for designation by the BPW and bring the easements to the RLP.
- ❖ RL Sponsors must apply annually to the Rural Legacy Board for participation in the Program and to receive grant funding. Competitive Process for Grant Awards.
- ❖ The Board of Public Works designates the Rural Legacy Areas and approves the grants for Rural Legacy funding.

## CREP Permanent Easements

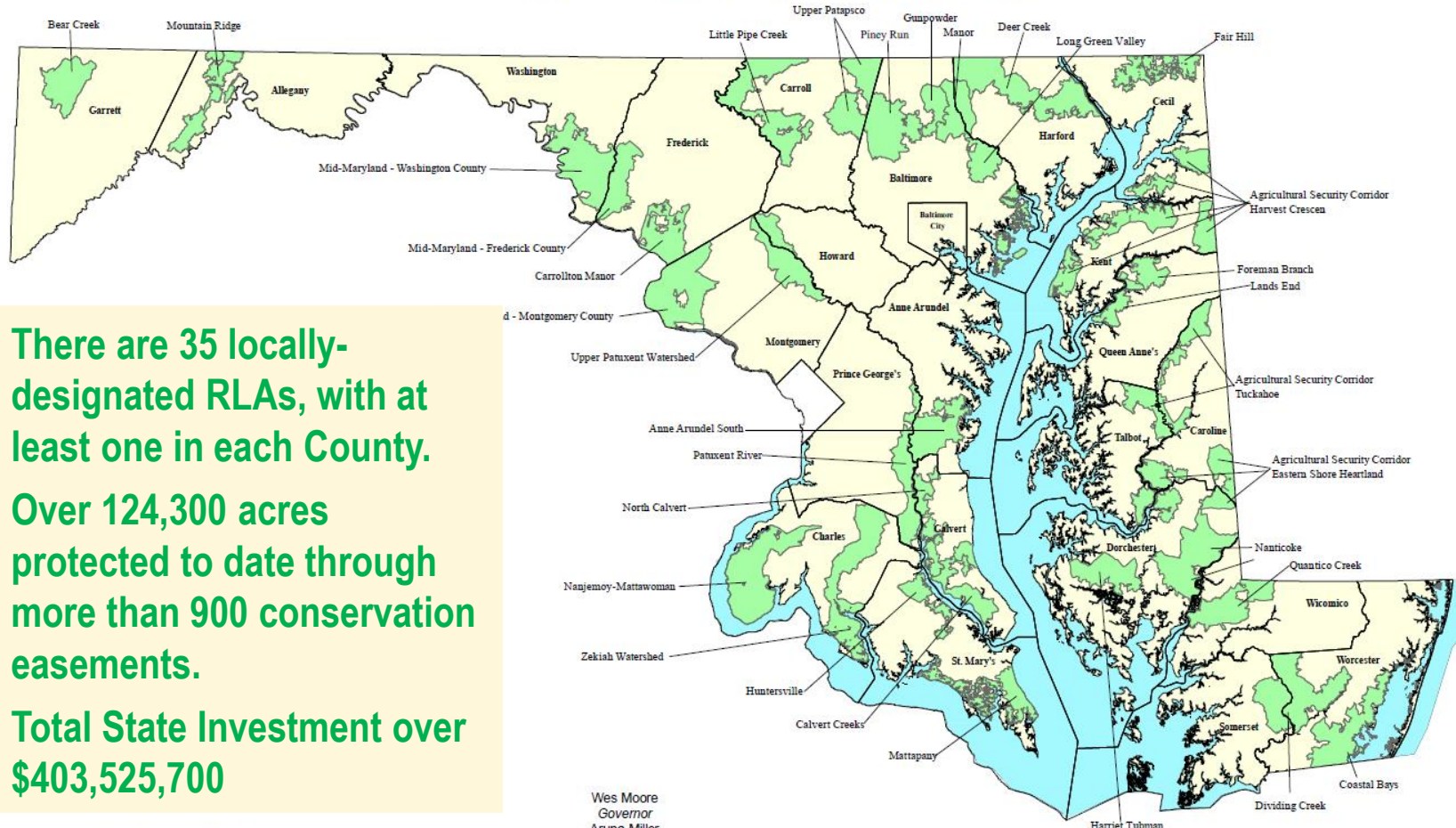
- ❖ MD purchases perpetual conservation easements from willing landowners that requires continued maintenance of the prescribed CREP conservation practices after expiration of the federal contract and in perpetuity.
- ❖ Only available to landowners who have existing federal CREP contracts.
- ❖ Program is per an Agreement between MD and USDA CCC (Commodity Credit Corporation) in which the parties “seek to take actions that will help reduce the occurrence of runoff, sediment, and nutrient accumulation in the Chesapeake Bay and that will promote enhanced wildlife habitats.”
- ❖ Funded through Program Open Space.
- ❖ 12,780 acres preserved across 15 counties.
- ❖ Total State Investment =/+ \$43 million
- ❖ **In Jan 2024, the BPW approved it for statewide use (prev. was only available in 9 counties).**
- ❖ Partnering with County governments and land trusts to administer the program, DNR provides oversight and funding for the purchase of conservation easements.



# Maryland's Rural Legacy Program



## FY 2024 Maryland Rural Legacy Areas

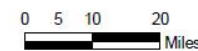


- There are 35 locally-designated RLAs, with at least one in each County.
- Over 124,300 acres protected to date through more than 900 conservation easements.
- Total State Investment over \$403,525,700



Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Center for Geospatial Products and Services  
580 Taylor Ave E-2 Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-260-8985 or 1-877-620-8DNR x8985  
dnr.maryland.gov  
DNR June 2023

Wes Moore  
Governor  
Aruna Miller  
Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz  
Secretary  
Dave Goshorn  
Deputy Secretary







# Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

Established 1977

**Purpose:** Preserve productive agricultural and woodland to provide for the continuing production of food and fiber for the citizens of Maryland. Farm owners continue to manage the property for agricultural purposes while restricting the land from non-agricultural commercial, industrial, and residential development.

**Key Partners:** landowners and local government

## Staff:

6 MDA staff (soon to be 8 as of FY25)

4 Assistant Attorneys General

2 Paralegals

3 Appraisers



## Protect

MALPF has protected more than 361,000 acres of Maryland's most productive farmland, consisting of 2,700 separate easements.



## Steward

MALPF staff work with County partners and the Office of the Attorney General, as needed, to ensure the adherence to the terms of the easement are protected in perpetuity.



## Partner

One of the keys of success of MALPF has been the strong State-County partnership involved, both at the financial level and staffing support, starting with applications through monitoring and stewardship support.



## Investment

As of January 1, 2024, over \$934 million of public investment have been used to purchase MALPF easements (State, County, and Federal).





# Maryland Forest Service

## Forest Stewardship

**Mission:** *Restore, manage, and protect Maryland's trees, forests, and forested ecosystems to sustain our natural resources and connect people to the land*

**Staff:** 96 permanent positions statewide, foresters and rangers assigned to each county

**Core Programs:** Stewardship/Utilization, Urban & Community Forestry, Fire, Health, Watershed, Legacy

**Protected Lands:** 213K+ acres of State Forest Land, managed as sustainable forests, Forest Conservation Act easements

**Partners:** Volunteer Forestry Boards, MD Tree Farm, MD Forestry Foundation, MUCFC, MD Forests Association, many NGOs, land trusts, federal, state, and local agencies, and many more

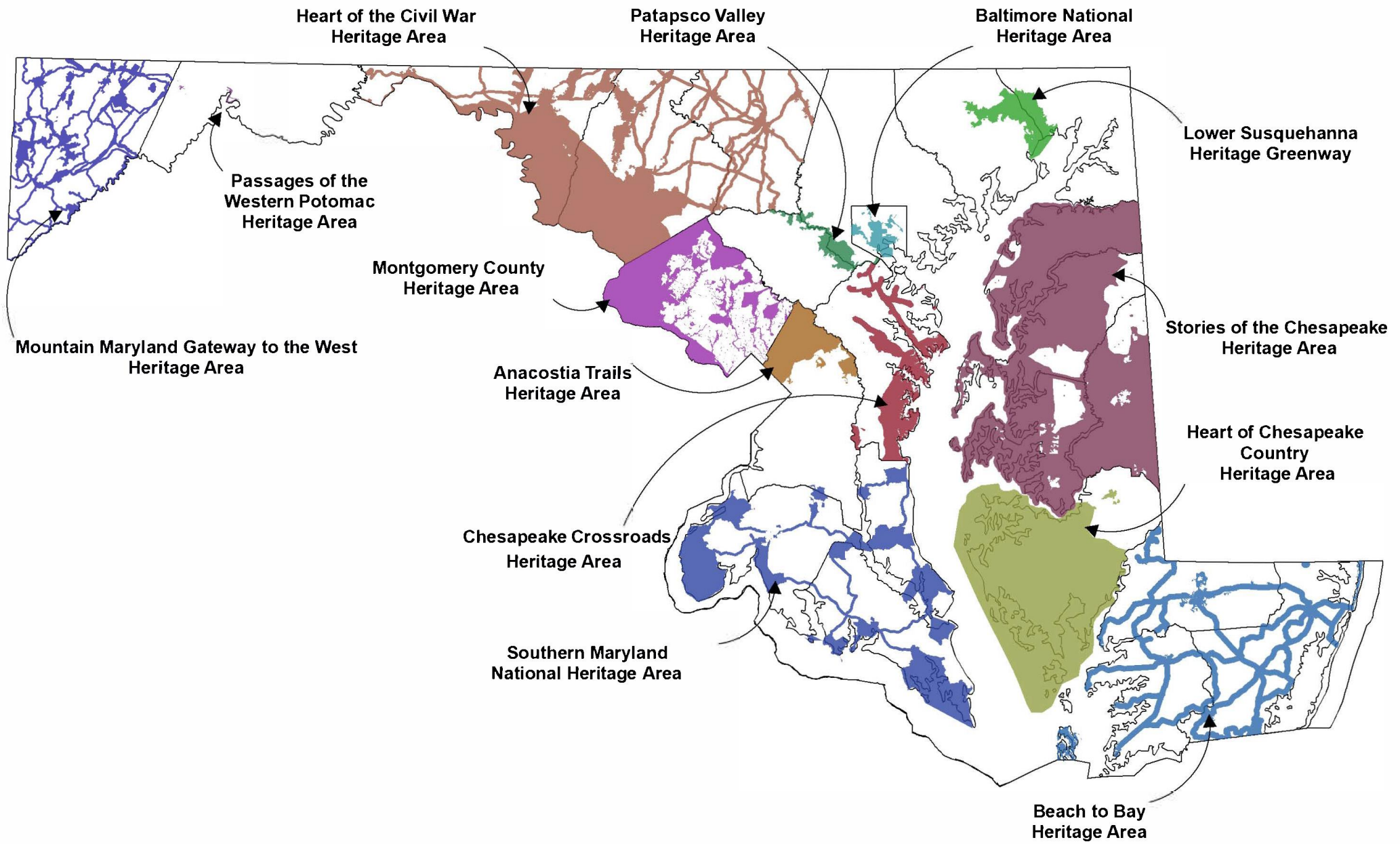


# 13 Heritage Areas in State of Maryland

- Locally Designated, State-Certified
- Supports Heritage Tourism
- Supports Conservation, Preservation, Education
- Granting Organizations
- Foster Partnerships
- Funded through Program Open Space

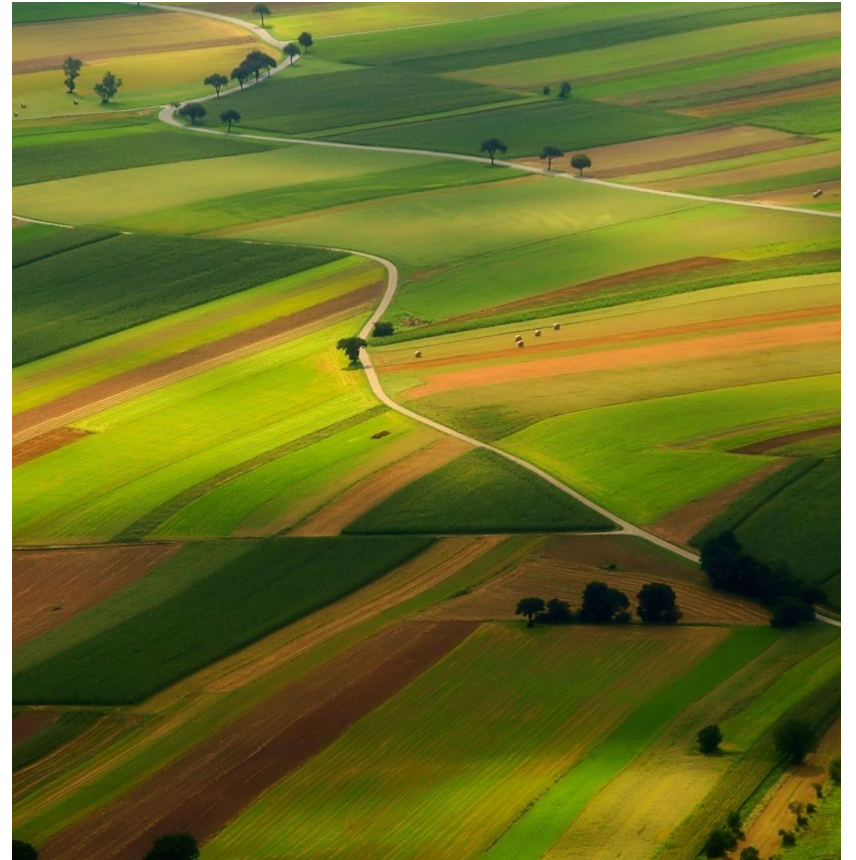


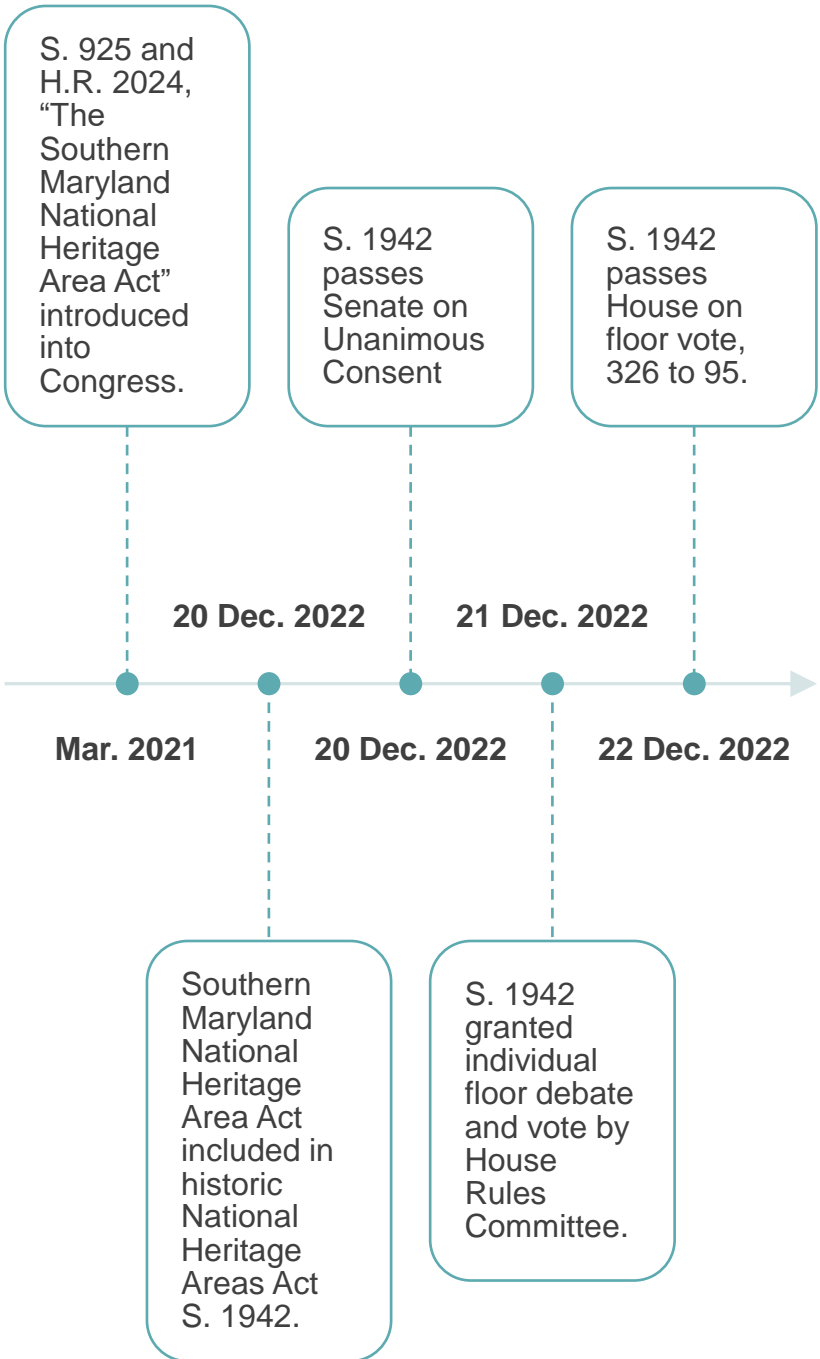




# 62 National Heritage Areas in the United States Requires an Act of Congress

- A National Heritage Area is designated by Congress for its unique nationally significant qualities and resources. It is a place where a combination of natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources have shaped a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape.
- A National Heritage Area employs a partnership approach to heritage development involving collaborative planning around a theme, industry and/or geographical feature that influenced the nation's culture and history.
- This planning strategy encourages residents, government agencies, nonprofit groups and private partners to agree on and prioritize programs and projects that recognize, preserve, celebrate and commemorate our national story.
- A National Heritage Area seeks short- and long-term solutions to conservation and development challenges by fostering relationships among regional stakeholders and encouraging them to work collaboratively to achieve shared goals.





January 5, 2023  
**Southern Maryland National Heritage Area**  
 Signed by the President and  
**BECAME LAW**



# Benefits of Heritage Areas

Economic, Cultural, Environmental

- **Promote Pride of Place and Identity**
- **Connect Communities**
- **Enhance Waterways and Landscapes**
- **Increase Educational Opportunities**
- **Create and sustain jobs**
- **Protect Sacred and Sensitive Places**







# The Launch of the National Heritage Area

May 25, 2023





<https://youtu.be/-aqajDUPMyM>





# Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation

## MARBIDCO (Opened doors in 2007)

- Is a quasi-governmental Rural Business Development Financial Intermediary Organization Serving All of Maryland.
- Mission is to provide financial support to MD's Ag & Resource-Based Industry (Ag/RBI) – **Offer 21 programs today.**
- With a focus on assisting:
  - Commercial Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry, & Seafood
  - Young & Beginning Farmers
  - Value-added Agriculture
  - Rural Land Preservation Facilitation
    - IPA's in 2008 and more recently NGFAP
- **1,340 Funded Projects - \$105 Million**  
(\$81M- loans, \$10M- grants, \$14M- NGFAP)

## The 2 Next Generation Programs

- **Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program** established to help beginning farmers who have trouble entering the farming profession due to high farmland costs and lack of access to adequate financing to purchase farmland. (Bills passed in 2006, 2008, 2016, & 2022.) Projects in 16 Counties.
- The **original Next Gen Program** (launched in 2018), awards funding through an **Easement Option Purchase at up to 51% of FMV** (capped at \$500,000) until a permanent ag easement is purchased (hopefully) within 4- to 7- years by a State/County rural land preservation program.
- The **Small Acreage Next Gen (SANG) Program** (launched in 2021), awards funding through an **Easement Purchase at 30%-60% of FMV** (capped at \$4,000/acre).



# Next Gen Programs Stats (Option Purchase & SANG)

County	Projects	Acreage Preserved/ To Be Preserved	County	Projects	Acreage Preserved/ To Be Preserved	County	Projects	Acreage Preserved/ To Be Preserved
Allegany	1	52.00	Charles	1	135.00	Prince George's	1	148.50
Anne Arundel	1	59.91	Dorchester	2	224.70	Queen Anne's	1	172.89
Baltimore	1	25.12	Frederick	12 2	1,116.22 46.41	Somerset		
Baltimore City			Garrett			St. Mary's	2 1	110.92 19.46
Calvert			Harford			Talbot	2	201.14
Caroline	5	393.24	Howard			Washington	8	963.98
Carroll			Kent	2	303.14	Wicomico	2	191.34
Cecil	1	53.66	Montgomery	1 1	60.00 34.18	Worcester		

Key: Next Gen Program Stats  
SANG Program Stats

	Projects	Acreage Preserved/ To Be Preserved	Next Gen Program Funding
Next Gen	43	4,211.76	\$ 13,488,113.91
SANG	4	100.05	\$ 369,433.00
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4,311.81</b>	<b>\$ 13,857,546.91</b>



# Maryland Environmental Trust

*Protecting Land Forever*

Established 1967

**Purpose:** Maryland Environmental Trust works with landowners, local communities, and land trusts to protect Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources. Since 1972, landowners have granted to MET over 1,100 conservation easements that protect more than 140,000 acres statewide.

**Key Partners:** landowners, land trusts, local and state governments

**Staff:** 10 staff, including 2 conservation easement planners and 4.5 stewardship support staff

**Core Programs:** Land Conservation, Monitoring and Stewardship, Land Trust Assistance and the Keep Maryland Beautiful Grants Programs.



## Protect

MET protects more than 140,000 acres of Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources.



## Steward

As part of ensuring the long-term protection of the land, MET takes on stewardship obligations to ensure that easement provisions are upheld forever.



## Partner

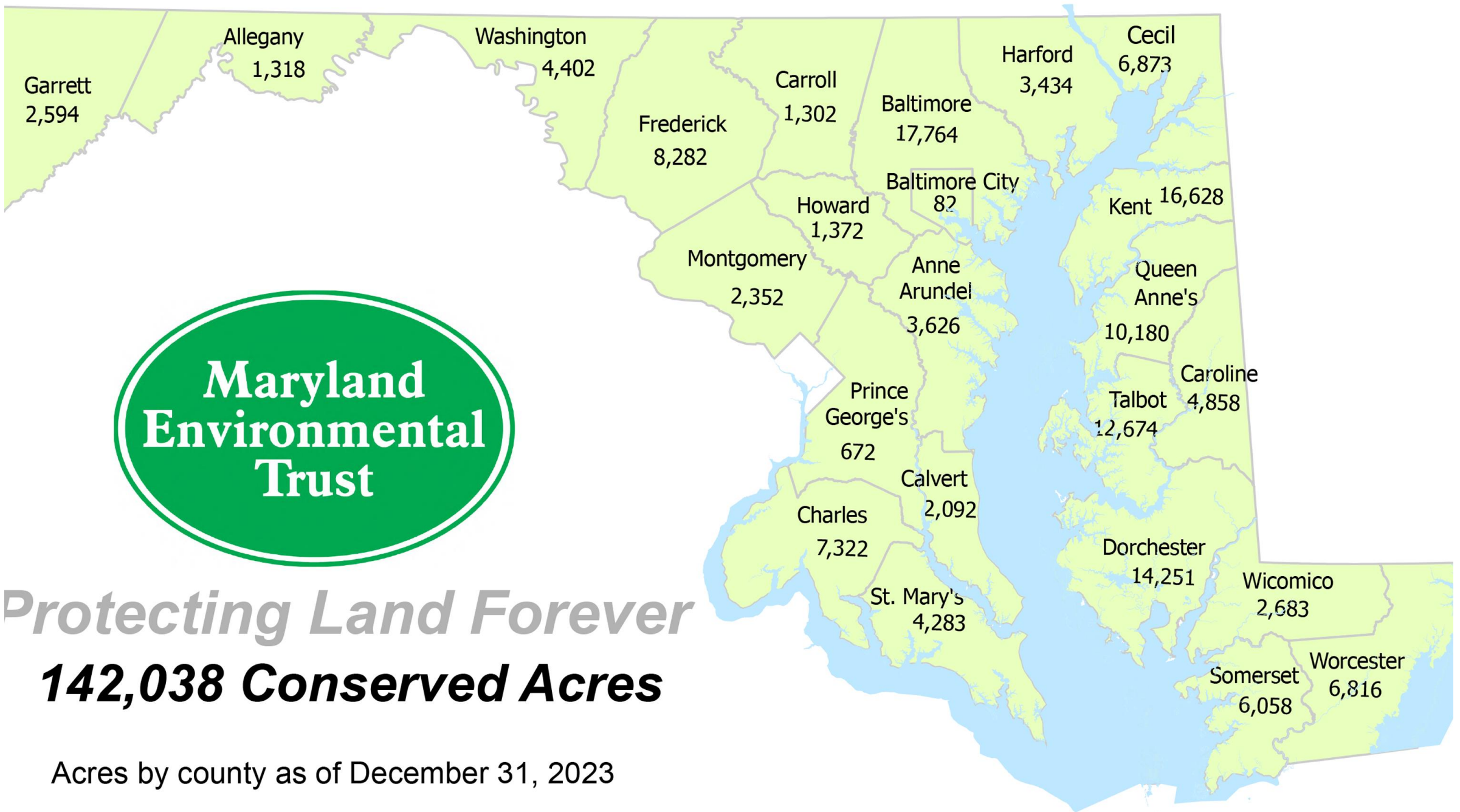
MET relies on its partnerships, with local land trusts and volunteers, to accomplish its land conservation goals and to steward the more than 1,100 conservation easements



## Invest

The Keep Maryland Beautiful Grants program invests in environmental stewardship. Awardees included nonprofits, schools, communities and local land trusts.





**Maryland  
Environmental  
Trust**

*Protecting Land Forever*  
**142,038 Conserved Acres**

Acres by county as of December 31, 2023

# The State of Maryland's Conservation Programs Agenda



## The State of (the State of) Maryland's Conservation Programs

May 30, 2024  
10:00am-2:00pm



PRESENTERS	
<b><u>Program Open Space Stateside</u></b> Maryland DNR, Land Acquisition & Planning	<b>Cheryl Wise</b> Supervisor, Program Open Space Stateside
<b><u>Program Open Space Local side</u></b> Maryland DNR, Land Acquisition & Planning	<b>Margaret Lashar</b> Local Grants Supervisor
<b><u>Rural Legacy Program</u></b> Maryland DNR, Land Acquisition & Planning	<b>Katrina Tucker</b> Conservation Easement Supervisor
<b><u>MD Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)</u></b> Maryland Department of Agriculture	<b>Michelle Cable</b> Executive Director
<b><u>Maryland Forest Service</u></b> Maryland DNR	<b>Anne Hairston-Strang, Ph.D.</b> Director and State Forester
<b><u>Maryland Heritage Areas Program</u></b>	<b>Lucille Walker</b> Executive Director, Southern MD National Heritage Area
<b><u>Maryland Agriculture and Resource-based Industries Development Corporation (MARBIDCO)</u></b>	<b>Steve McHenry</b> Executive Director
<b><u>Maryland Environmental Trust</u></b> Maryland DNR	<b>John Turgeon</b> Director
Also:	
Josh Hastings, Forever Maryland	
Ann Jones, Partners for Open Space/Balt Co Land Trust Alliance	
Owen Bailey, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy/Partners for Open Space	

### AGENDA

- 10:00am**      **Welcome/Goals for the Day** (Josh Hastings & Michelle Grafton)
- 10:10am**      **Introducing the Speakers: "The State of (the State of) Maryland's Conservation Programs"**
- 10:45am**      **State of the State Panel Discussion: Future of the Programs and Organizations**
- 11:50am**      **Final Thoughts from State of the State Panelists**
- 12:00pm**      **Lunch**
- 12:50pm**      **Recapping the 2024 State Legislative Session and Forecasting 2025**
- 1:10pm**      **All-Attendee Facilitated Discussion**
- Addressing Anti-40X40 Conservation Challenges: Invasive Species and Solar Sprawl**
- 1:50pm**      **Summary of the Day** (Josh Hastings & Michelle Grafton)
- 2:00pm**      **Adjourn**



**MAY 30, 2024**

# **THE STATE OF MARYLAND'S CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

